

very much outdated and very much out of touch and that has shortchanged American innovation as proven by our laboratory in the Department of Energy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

TURKEY

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, a few days ago, in front of a townhall in northern Turkey, President Erdogan threatened a missile strike on Athens.

Greece is afraid of our missile. They say that the Typhoon Missile will hit Athens.

Then he addressed the Greek people directly and said:

It will, unless you stay calm.

This is a NATO member directly threatening to target Athens, a city of 3 million civilians. According to the United Nations, an intentional attack on civilians—an intentional attack on civilians—is a war crime.

I come to the floor today to condemn the recent actions of the Turkish President, which are not only disturbing, they are totally unacceptable. For years, Erdogan has pursued repressive, anti-democratic policies at home and abroad, from criminalizing insults of Turkey and freedom of expression, to the suppression of dissent and political opposition figures. Erdogan has jailed and silenced so many pro-democracy and human rights activists that at one point, there were more lawyers and journalists in Turkish jails than anywhere else in the world.

His government continues to try to hide the truth about the Armenian genocide, prosecuting writers and historians. In 2008, one of the journalists who wrote about the genocide was assassinated on the streets of Istanbul.

As violent as Erdogan's tenure has been at home, his foreign policy has been absolutely awful. On the eve of Baku's war in Nagorno-Karabakh, Turkey sold Azerbaijan \$77 million of military equipment that was used to attack innocent Armenians.

It is no surprise that Erdogan met in Tehran this summer with the Russian and Iranian Presidents, some of the world's most brutal dictators. Just look at the leaders he collaborates with. It is because he shares their world view, and you can see this clearly in the way he approaches the region.

Five decades after Turkey's illegal occupation of Cyprus, Erdogan is still stoking divisions on the island. Last year, he proposed reopening the Cypriot town of Varosha in an attempt to spread Turkish influence. That is a violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions that was condemned by the European Union. This September, Erdogan threatened to reinforce the already 40,000 Turkish troops in Cyprus with more land, naval, and aerial weapons, ammunition, and vehicles. Clearly, Erdogan looks at Putin's illegal annexation of parts of Ukraine and is taking note. That is what makes President Erdogan's recent comments about

launching missile attacks on Greece so disconcerting.

We have seen Erdogan challenge Greek sovereignty repeatedly. This summer, he sent fighter jets over the Greek islands in the Aegean Sea. His threats to strike Athens fit a pattern of Turkish claims to what is Greek territory. He has said Turkish forces may land in Greece "suddenly one night."

He seems to be increasing his illegal autocratic behavior in the runup to the elections in Turkey next year. In November, he launched an air, artillery, and drone assault on Kurdish cities in northern Syria and suggested ground forces would soon follow. "Payback time," Turkey's Ministry of National Defense tweeted, announcing the operation against the Kurds who have long been a target of Erdogan's wrath, attacking the very forces that are essential U.S. partners in combating ISIS, and in doing so, putting at risk U.S. troops in Syria.

He has been out for revenge at home too. Just last week, one of Erdogan's political rivals, the popular mayor of Istanbul, was sentenced to prison for 2½ years. The charge? Insulting members of the Supreme Electoral Council. The charge was insulting members of the Supreme Electoral Council. That would be the equivalent of an American being put in jail for 2½ years for insulting some State electoral commission or the Federal Election Commission or any entity as such. And in case the prison sentence didn't send a clear enough message, the court also imposed a political ban on the mayor.

Erdogan might be using this aggression and oppression as a diversion, no doubt, from the dire failure of his own economy, he might be doing it out of spite, or he might be doing it because he is a thug. But one thing is clear: The United States must take the Turkish President's actions seriously. Those who just simply say: Oh, well, he is a lot of bluster—they do so at risk. They said Putin was bluster, and we have a war in the European continent.

We need to hold Erdogan accountable for his behavior when he violates international laws or challenges democratic norms or allows his forces to commit human rights abuses. That is why I am calling for free and fair elections in Turkey. I am asking the international community of democracies to condemn Erdogan's jailing of his political opponent. I want our allies to use their leverage to try to prevent further incursions into northeastern Syria. And I am demanding that Erdogan end all overflights of Greece and pull every last Turkish soldier out of Cyprus.

I think, given all of his recent behavior, the United States should not be putting F-16 fighter jets in President Erdogan's hands. That is why, as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I will not approve any F-16s for Turkey until he halts his campaign of aggression across the entire region. I am sure this won't make me many friends in Ankara, and President

Erdogan has criticized me personally, calling me an enemy of the state. But if standing up to human rights abuses makes me an enemy of Erdogan's; if calling out Turkey, under Erdogan, for arming Azerbaijan and enabling the massacre of innocent Armenian civilians makes me an enemy of Erdogan's; if demanding Turkey recognizes Greek and Cypriot sovereignty makes me an enemy of Erdogan's, that is a badge I will wear with honor.

So to my colleagues here in the Senate, I will close by saying do not be afraid to stand up for American values in the face of Erdogan's aggression.

To the international community, do not hesitate to hold Turkey accountable for violating international law.

To the citizens living in the shadow of Erdogan's Typhoon missiles, do not forget the United States stands shoulder to shoulder with you.

To those people in Turkey who still hope for a free, democratic future, do not give up. One day soon, with your bravery, peace and prosperity will return to your homeland.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the confirmation vote on the Gruenberg nomination occur following the completion of my remarks and those of Senator BROWN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TENNESSEE

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I have always believed that serving the people of Tennessee requires that I meet them right there in their communities, and I bring their ideas to Washington to put those perspectives to work. What we do on Capitol Hill gets a lot of attention, but back home is where the real work of making this country work really gets done.

So this year, I have completed another of my tours of all 95 counties; that is every county in our State. At every stop, I met with local officials, business owners, civic leaders, and citizens who really keep these communities afloat. That is a task that my Democratic colleagues have made almost impossible with their massive spending bills and their attacks on small businesses.

In so many ways, their situation mirrors that of thousands of families struggling under recordbreaking inflation and broken supply chains. During teletownhall calls with Tennesseans in each of our 95 counties, this was a constant refrain: They are finding more month at the end of their paycheck than paycheck at the end of their month. From the moment their feet hit the floor in the morning until they put their heads on the pillow at night, Tennesseans are counting their pennies and wondering when the Democrats are going to put their radical agenda aside and go back to putting the American people first.

In spite of the mess the Democrats have made with the national economy, Tennessee communities are growing because their local leaders follow the same rules with their county coffers as they do with their small business or household budgets: They spend within their means, they only buy what they need, and they keep their paperwork in order.

Washington would do well to follow their example and embrace two key pieces of legislation I introduced this year. In response to the 40-year high inflation the Democrats caused with their spending spree, I filed a resolution to raise the Senate voting threshold to two-thirds of all Senators for all spending bills if inflation is higher than 4 percent. I also introduced the IRS User Fee Reduction Act. This bill would lower IRS user fees by 95 percent for those with a gross income of less than \$5 million and allow these small businesses to use the services the IRS offers without getting hit with a massive bill.

Times are hard enough for taxpayers without having to worry that their government is working against them. We saw plenty of evidence this year showing that the bureaucracy is actively preventing growth and development.

The commencement of the massive Blue Oval City project in Haywood County, TN, was clogged in permitting redtape and agency misalignment. It took a remarkable effort to straighten that out, but we got the job done, and now they are on their way to creating thousands of jobs.

Before this fall, the McKellar-Sipes airport in Jackson, TN, had been without TSA service for 13 years; but by working with the folks in Jackson and with the TSA, I was able to get that service set up for outgoing passengers. Now this area of west Tennessee has reliable commercial air transportation.

But, remember, getting rid of redtape, getting it out of the way, this is something our local governments had to fight for, and it shouldn't be that way.

Meanwhile, Tennessee farmers are in the fight of their lives over a combination of unsustainable fuel and fertilizer prices, and regulatory burdens so heavy they are destroying the concept of the family farm.

They are the reason I called on the Biden administration to pursue energy independence, and they are the reason I will keep fighting to implement an "Operation Warp Speed" for American-produced energy.

The government's job is not to micromanage. Our job is to give these businesses the tools they need to create the environment that they need for jobs growth to take place.

That is what we did when we passed the DRIVE Safe Act to make it easier for the trucking industry to hire and train the workers they need to ease the strains on our supply chains.

It is what Senator MENENDEZ and I did when we introduced our Supply

Chain Database Act, which became law this year. Soon, manufacturers will have access to the information they need to meet demand.

This will make a huge difference in Hamblen County, TN. Morristown is home to more than 109 manufacturing companies. About 25 percent of the jobs available in Morristown are associated with these manufacturers, which is about double the national average.

This focus on using innovation to help local economies flourish is making a difference elsewhere in Tennessee. The Oak Ridge National Lab is home to Frontier, which is the world's fastest supercomputer and the first ever exascale computer. It is also a magnet for talent. People and businesses are moving to East Tennessee to take advantage of the jobs and the other opportunities that our investment in Oak Ridge has created.

Elsewhere in Oak Ridge, high school students are already benefiting from investment in research and education opportunities in advanced manufacturing. And the Smart Factory Institute in Cleveland, TN, is running a state-of-the-art vocational training facility that is revolutionizing workforce development and training. None of this would be happening if Washington had ignored the requests of local leaders.

This year, I brought the same local focus to my work with the healthcare industry. Rural hospitals are struggling in every State; and in Tennessee, this is leaving thousands of people without access to basic healthcare.

The telehealth expansion policies that became mainstream during the pandemic saved lives and brought healthcare to people who had never had easy access to a doctor. This year, I fought to make those expansions permanent, and I also persuaded CMS to keep the low-wage index hospital policy on the books. For at least another year, this will protect rural hospitals from losing out on the reimbursements they need to keep the doors open. And if rural patients need to fill a prescription after a doctor's visit, they will be able to do so.

I secured a new rule that would prohibit PBMs from clawing back fees from community pharmacists. This will bring some much needed stability to those businesses and allow them to keep serving rural customers.

And this kind of targeted support is paying off. In March, we broke ground on the stand-alone Fentress County emergency department. It took more than a few phone calls with CMS to sort out the waivers, but we got it done, and now we are doing the same work in Clay County.

Tennessee is home, also, to the finest military community in the country. And this year, they had to wait until the 11th hour to see if the Senate would come through with a defense authorization bill.

It had been dangling over their heads since July, and they are truly relieved to see that it finally passed. And I

want to thank my colleagues on the Armed Services Committee for supporting the amendments I submitted on behalf of Tennessee servicemembers and their families.

They are the most important element of our national defense, which is why I championed the repeal of the COVID vaccine mandate. I believe that no one brave enough to don that uniform should have to choose between taking a shot and losing their job.

Tennessee's military community was ecstatic to hear that the U.S. Senate agrees with me on that statement. We have a duty to take care of our men and women in uniform during and after their service. That is why I fought to include support for workforce development and STEM training in the NDAA and why I will keep fighting for expanded access to community care so once those servicemembers return to civilian life, they will be able to see a doctor close to home when they need to see them.

As much as Tennesseans focus on national security, they are equally concerned with safety in their own communities. Since mid-2019, America's largest cities have seen a significant rise in violent crime.

In Tennessee, law enforcement officials are struggling due to a lack of funding and manpower. The Restoring Law and Order Act, which I introduced earlier this year with Senator HAGERTY, will provide much needed resources to law enforcement so that they can get drugs off the streets and put criminals behind bars and keep them there.

I truly hope that my Democratic colleagues will agree that this sounds much more effective than defunding these police departments. We need to get this bill passed and to the President's desk.

And just this month, President Biden signed my Speak Out Act into law. This bans the use of predispute nondisclosure agreements in situations involving sexual misconduct. I want to thank Senator GILLIBRAND for working so hard on this legislation with me.

And I also want to thank Senator BLUMENTHAL for working with me to get Reese's Law across the finish line. Now, this will require new safety standards for toys and other products to prevent children from swallowing button batteries.

Safety was a key theme of the work we did together on the Committee for Consumer Protection this year. As we explored ways that we could rein in Big Tech, we looked to regain control over your "virtual you," your presence online, and also to introduce competition into the tech sector.

This past February, Senator BLUMENTHAL and I introduced the Kids Online Safety Act after a series of hearings that exposed Big Tech's disregard for the safety of its underage users.

We also worked closely together on the Open App Market Act, which will

stop tech giants from stifling competition in the App Store marketplace.

Both of these bills have earned extensive bipartisan support, and I see no reason why we won't be able to get them across the finish line very soon.

I want to conclude by thanking the thousands of local officials and leaders and the Tennesseans who dedicate so much of their time and their energy to making Tennessee a wonderful place to call home.

I am grateful for their hard work and their willingness to work with me for a better Tennessee.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

NOMINATION OF MARTIN J. GRUENBERG

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I rise to urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the nomination of Martin Gruenberg to be a member and chairperson of the board of directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation—what most of America knows as FDIC. Mr. Gruenberg is an extraordinary and qualified nominee who came out of the Banking and Housing Committee with bipartisan support. He has been confirmed by the U.S. Senate, unanimously, five times.

Senator TOOMEY, the ranking member of the Banking Committee, someone whom I have not always agreed with on nominations, voted in favor of Mr. Gruenberg's nomination as part of a bipartisan package to fill the FDIC Board.

I thank my departing friend from Pennsylvania for his support and his cooperation.

Mr. Gruenberg's credentials speak for themselves: a career public servant, the longest-serving member of the FDIC board. As I said, the Senate has confirmed him unanimously five times. He has been nominated and confirmed over and over again.

He first joined the FDIC in 2005 after spending 25 years on Capitol Hill and working as a senior counsel on the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee for Senator Sarbanes.

As the Presiding Officer knows, this committee has just been known as the Banking Committee for some time, and the Banking Committee was, essentially, Wall Street's committee. When I took over as chair, we emphasized this committee is Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. Its priorities are housing; its priorities are public transit; its priorities are making the banking system safer, not just to do the bidding of Wall Street.

Since joining the FDIC, Mr. Gruenberg served as chair, as vice chair, acting chair, and member of the FDIC. Take a minute and think about that in his qualifications: chair, vice chair, acting chair, and member.

I have served on the Banking and Housing Committee since 2007. I don't remember any FDIC nominee, or I am not sure I remember any nominee for anything that has had that kind of experience, that level of expertise.

Since becoming acting chair in February 2022, Mr. Gruenberg has wasted no time getting to work for the American people. He has focused on strengthening the Community Reinvestment Act to expand access to credit and investments in low- and moderate-income communities.

He is reviewing the FDIC's bank merger process to ensure it assesses the impact bank mergers have on competition and on access to financial services in communities across the country.

We all know that as banks have gotten larger and larger, gargantuan in many ways compared to what their sizes were during the disaster of 15 years ago—and we know that that can be a problem for our economy. So he is going to look at that much more closely than others.

Under his leadership, the FDIC evaluates the risk posed by cryptocurrencies and digital assets to consumers and to the overall safety and soundness of the banking system.

As I said during his nomination hearing, Mr. Gruenberg has seen our financial system at its highest and its lowest points. During the financial crisis when Wall Street and big corporations crashed our economy, Mr. Gruenberg worked on a bipartisan basis with then-FDIC Chair Sheila Bair to pick up the pieces.

He helped to restore—alongside her, helped to restore—a Republican, I would add—trust and confidence that our money in banks is safe.

He helped implement reforms passed by Congress to strengthen capital requirements and protect depositors from future financial crisis.

He brings this experience and dedication with him as our country emerges from the pandemic. I can think of no better person to serve as chair of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation than Marty Gruenberg.

Before I conclude, I want to note that, in addition to Mr. Gruenberg, the Senate is considering the nomination of two other seats to the FDIC Board. Once we have Mr. Gruenberg and the other two FDIC nominees, Travis Hill and Jonathan McKernan, confirmed—both Republicans—the agency will have in place for the first time since 2015 a full board of directors. So almost a decade it has been, three-fourths of a decade since this FDIC has had a full board of directors.

I credit President Biden for making this a priority. I credit Laura and Mohammad and others on my staff for making this a priority, and I credit the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs for doing this: first time since 2015, a full board of directors.

I urge my colleagues to support Mark Gruenberg's nomination to the FDIC Board.

VOTE ON GRUENBERG NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Gruenberg nomination?

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. HICKENLOOPER), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) would have voted "Nay."

The result was announced—yeas 45, nays 39, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 400 Ex.]

YEAS—45

Baldwin	Hassan	Reed
Bennet	Heinrich	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hirono	Sanders
Blunt	Kelly	Schatz
Booker	King	Schumer
Brown	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cantwell	Leahy	Smith
Carper	Lujan	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Toomey
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warnock
Durbin	Ossoff	Warren
Feinstein	Padilla	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden

NAYS—39

Blackburn	Graham	Paul
Boozman	Grassley	Portman
Braun	Hagerty	Romney
Capito	Hawley	Rounds
Cassidy	Hoehn	Rubio
Collins	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Kennedy	Shelby
Cramer	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Daines	Marshall	Tuberville
Ernst	McConnell	Wicker
Fischer	Murkowski	Young

NOT VOTING—16

Barrasso	Kaine	Sasse
Burr	Lummis	Shaheen
Cardin	Manchin	Tillis
Cruz	Moran	Van Hollen
Hickenlooper	Murray	
Inhofe	Risch	

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 1298, 1299, 1300, 1302, and 1297.